

Chapter 2

Alternatives

Introduction

This chapter presents management alternatives, including the Proposed Action, for Meadowood Farm. The alternatives were developed using public input, by an interdisciplinary team, and are based on the questions/issues and planning criteria discussed in Chapter 1. The Proposed Action is the proposed management decision. It is the result of resource evaluation by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff and the incorporation of comments from the public. It is an indication of how the BLM envisions Meadowood Farm being managed. This chapter also includes a list of standard management guidelines that are an inherent part of the Proposed Action.

The BLM has a common goal through the Proposed Action and the alternatives. That goal is to strive to assure that the public will have a safe and enjoyable experience and that a healthy ecosystem is maintained.

The Proposed Action and the Alternatives

The Proposed Action and each alternative consists of three elements: Management Objectives, Land-Use Allocations and Management Actions.

What are Management Objectives? Management Objectives outline BLM's management approach and the resource conditions to be maintained or enhanced. When approved, Management Objectives become land-use decisions to guide future actions.

What are Land-Use Allocations? Land-Use Allocations are decisions addressing what uses will be allowed, restricted or excluded. Land-Use Allocations also control what forms of management will be allowed or not allowed.

What are Management Actions? Management Actions are anticipated measures taken to ensure Management Objectives are met and Land-Use Allocations are followed. Not all Management Actions can be anticipated during preparation of a Land Use Plan (LUP). Also, some of the Management Actions listed might prove to be unnecessary or insufficient.

Alternative #1 (No Action)

Management Objective: Management of Meadowood Farm would be a continuation of existing management practices and activities established after the property was acquired by the BLM on October 18, 2001. Boarding of domestic private horses would continue and a hay storage shelter would be constructed. The property would not be available to support the Bureau's Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) program and equine partnerships. Existing facilities at Meadowood Farm would be available to boarders for trail riding or other equestrian activities. The property would be closed to the general public. Recreational motorized and non-motorized passenger vehicles, and

motorized hobby activities (see glossary), would not be allowed. Natural resource management activities would be limited to protection and natural progression through vegetative successional stages.

Alternative #2 (Minimum Use)

Management Objective: Management for protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources would guide recreational and equine use of Meadowood Farm. Boarding of private horses would be phased out. The Bureau's WH&B program, equine partnerships and horse-related programs would be initiated. Day-use recreation and environmental education programs and activities would be offered; however, natural and cultural resource management goals and objectives would take precedence over these activities. Recreational motorized and non-motorized passenger vehicles, and motorized hobby activities, would not be allowed.

Proposed Action

Management Objective: Management of natural and cultural resources would be balanced with recreation, environmental education and equine use of Meadowood Farm. Boarding of private horses would be allowed. The Bureau's WH&B program, equine partnerships, horse-related programs, and a WH&B holding facility would be developed. The goals and objectives of these programs and activities would be balanced with the goals and objectives of the natural and cultural resource management programs. Environmental education programs would be developed, and an environmental education center would be constructed. Recreational non-motorized passenger vehicle use and motorized hobby activities would be allowed, however, these activities would be restricted to designated areas and times to ensure visitor safety and to minimize potential use conflicts. Recreational motorized passenger vehicle use would not be allowed. Wildlife, vegetation and riparian/wetland management would focus on species diversity, quality, protection and enhancement in balance with visitor-use activities.

Alternative #4 (Maximum Use)

Management Objective: Management of recreation and environmental education programs and activities would guide natural and cultural resources management goals and objectives on Meadowood Farm. Boarding of private horses would continue. The Bureau's WH&B program, equine partnerships and horse-related programs would be initiated and would include development of a WH&B holding facility. Recreation and environmental education programs and activities would be offered and would include construction of an environmental education center. Recreational motorized and non-motorized passenger vehicle use and motorized hobby activities would be allowed, however, these activities would be regulated and restricted to designated areas and times to ensure visitor safety and to minimize potential conflicts. Wildlife, vegetation and riparian/wetland management would focus on protection and maintenance of existing resources.

Standard Management Common to All Alternatives

The following list of Standard Management Common to All Alternatives will apply in addition to management constraints of the Proposed Action. Standard Management Common to All Alternatives is a combination of existing policies and Best Management Practices (BMPs), and includes determinations made during the development of planning criteria. When not covered by statute or regulation, the rationale for implementing the standard management guidance is stated.

1. Meadowood Farm will be designated a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). When an area is identified as having the potential for high public use and or cultural/natural resource management, the SRMA designation is used for internal administrative and budgetary considerations. The SRMA designation does not restrict management options, activities or use of Meadowood Farm.
2. All future management actions will include evaluation of environmental impacts within the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance process.
3. Prior to disturbance of the surface on Meadowood Farm, site-specific evaluations will be made to determine the presence of significant resource values before initiating the action. Resources to be evaluated will include, but are not limited to, recreation opportunities, visual, soils, cultural, wetlands/riparian areas, and federally and state-listed special-status species.
4. All management actions will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470), which provides protection for significant cultural resources. An appropriate level of inventory will be conducted for all actions with a potential to affect these resources. Actions will require consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and/or the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800).
5. Consultation with appropriate federally recognized Native American tribes will occur when a specific action is proposed.
6. BLM will avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of any federally or state-listed special-status species, will actively promote species recovery, and will work to improve the habitat of special-status species. If a federally listed special-status species would be affected by a proposed Management Action, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, would be conducted. If a proposed management action would impact a state-listed special status species, the BLM will confer with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.
7. Management actions will be conducted in conformance with the objectives of the Virginia Air Quality Implementation Plan. The State Air Pollution Control Board promulgates Virginia's air regulations. These regulations cover stationary sources, such as industrial facilities, mobile

sources, such as vehicle emissions, and ensure that certain projects conform to federal requirements.

8. Management actions will be conducted in a manner conforming to the water quality management objectives developed by Virginia as required by the 1987 Water Quality Act Amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

9. Measures for minimizing impacts on and enhancing soil, water, riparian/wetlands, wildlife, and vegetation resources will be outlined through BMPs developed in coordination with partner federal, state, and local agencies. Included among the local guiding regulations for the BMPs is the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act of 1988.

10. Protection of migratory birds will be accomplished in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186 of January 10, 2001, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds.

11. Protection of bald eagles and similar species will be accomplished in accordance with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

12. Exotic, invasive species will be addressed in accordance with the National Invasive Species Act and the Executive Order on Invasive Species of 1999.

13. Meadowood Farm is closed to commercial mineral leasing/development and mineral material sales.

14. Proposed uses will be evaluated for their potential to release hazardous materials into the environment. Use of hazardous materials must comply with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Disposal of hazardous materials on Meadowood Farm is prohibited. The discovery of unpermitted hazardous material will be handled in accordance with the reporting, removal, and remediation requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act.

15. Meadowood Farm will not be available for disposal through sale or exchange, and it is a right-of-way avoidance area. Meadowood Farm is being designated a right-of-way avoidance area because it is being designated a SRMA. In most cases, granting of rights-of-way for projects such as powerlines and pipelines, or county or state road projects, would not be compatible with current or future management objectives.

16. All wildland and structural fires on Meadowood Farm will be suppressed in an aggressive and safe manner. Applicable fire management practices will emphasize fire prevention, hazardous fuel reduction, rapid response, and use of appropriate suppression techniques.

17. The BLM will allow limited entry hunting on Meadowood Farm. Hunting will be permitted to assist the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Fairfax County to meet the county deer management population objectives in concert with the Meadowood wildlife habitat goals. For public safety, Meadowood Farm will be closed to the general public during the hunts.

18. BLM reserves the authority to implement use fees at Meadowood Farm. These fees may include permits for special events, organized groups, concessions, day use, and other uses. BLM also reserves the authority to close the property to other uses during special events.

19. Facilities at Meadowood Farm will be brought into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (PL 101-336).

20. All trails will be closed to motorized and non-motorized vehicle use, unless designated open. Off-trail use by motorized and non-motorized vehicles, equestrian, and pedestrian traffic will be prohibited to protect public safety and the resources.

21. Swimming in the ponds at Meadowood Farm will not be allowed due to health and safety concerns.

22. All Meadowood Farm trails, existing and new, will be planned, constructed, and maintained following BMPs to ensure resource health and patron safety. The following are some materials that will be used to manage trails: BLM Trails Manual 9114 and H-9114-1, BLM Sign Handbook, USDA Forest Service Trail Construction & Maintenance Notebook, and USDA Forest Service Wetland Trail Design and Construction Notebook.

23. Visitor safety is a top priority at Meadowood Farm. Meadowood Farm management will follow standard safety practices found in BLM Manual 1112 and associated handbooks.

Table 2-1. The Alternatives (Note: LUA = Land-Use Allocation, MA = Management Action, WH&B = wild horse and burro)

Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2 (Minimum Use)	Proposed Action	Alternative 4 (Maximum Use)
MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: Management practices in place after 10/18/01 would continue.	MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: Meadowood Farm would be managed for natural and cultural resources with regulated visitor use.	MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: Meadowood Farm would be managed for regulated visitor use with emphasis on recreation, natural resources, and equine and environmental education activities.	MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: Meadowood Farm would be managed for a variety of recreation, environmental education, and equine purposes with emphasis on visitor use.
HORSES - General The number of horses and burros would not exceed a total of 50. Acreage allocated to pasture and facilities would be about 50 acres. A hay storage shelter would be constructed.	HORSES - General The number of horses and burros would not exceed a total of 50. Acreage allocated to pasture and facilities would be about 50 acres. A hay storage shelter would be constructed.	HORSES - General The number of horses and burros would not exceed a total of 100. Acreage allocated to pasture and facilities would be about 100 acres. Separate stables, corrals, and hay storage shelters would be constructed.	HORSES - General The number of horses and burros would not exceed a total of 150. Acreage allocated to pasture and facilities would be about 150 acres. Separate stables, corrals, and hay storage shelters would be constructed.
HORSES - WH&B LUA: None. MA: None.	HORSES - WH&B LUA: Adoption events only; WH&B could be held in temporary facilities. MA: No permanent holding facilities constructed.	HORSES - WH&B LUA: Adoption events, individual adoptions by reservation, and holding facility for up to 50 animals. MA: A permanent adoption and holding facility would be constructed.	HORSES - WH&B LUA: Adoption events, walk-in adoptions, and holding facility for up to 50 animals. MA: A permanent adoption and holding facility would be constructed.
HORSE - Partnerships LUA: None. MA: None.	HORSE - Partnerships LUA: Available. MA: BLM would consider equine partnerships.	HORSE - Partnerships LUA: Available. MA: BLM would consider equine partnerships.	HORSE - Partnerships LUA: Available. MA: BLM would consider equine partnerships.
HORSES - Boarders LUA: Allowed. MA: A contractor, concessionaire or BLM staff would oversee boarding.	HORSES - Boarders LUA: Phased out. MA: A contractor, concessionaire or BLM staff would oversee boarding until phased out.	HORSES - Boarders LUA: Allowed. MA: A contractor, concessionaire or BLM staff would oversee boarding.	HORSES - Boarders LUA: Allowed. MA: A contractor, concessionaire or BLM staff would oversee boarding.
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION LUA: No facilities or programs. MA: None.	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION LUA: No facility constructed; events held occasionally. MA: Host limited number of events.	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION LUA: Facility constructed; open to individuals daily, and to groups by reservation. MA: Construct and staff facilities.	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION LUA: Facility constructed; open to individuals and groups daily. MA: Construct and staff facilities.

Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2 (Minimum Use)	Proposed Action	Alternative 4 (Maximum Use)
RECREATION - Camping LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Camping LUA: Not allowed; except as authorized by BLM for environmental education. MA: Develop guidelines for very limited camping.	RECREATION - Camping LUA: Not allowed; except as authorized by BLM for environmental education. MA: Develop guidelines for very limited camping.	RECREATION - Camping LUA: Allowed in designated areas. MA: Camping areas would be developed.
RECREATION - Fishing LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Fishing LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Fishing LUA: Public fishing allowed. MA: Designate areas and times of use, and develop public fishing access.	RECREATION - Fishing LUA: Public fishing allowed. MA: Designate areas and times of use; develop public fishing access.
RECREATION - Motorized Hobby LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Motorized Hobby LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Motorized Hobby LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Designate areas and times of use.	RECREATION - Motorized Hobby LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Designate areas and times of use.
RECREATION - Trails Pedestrian LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Trails Pedestrian LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Existing trails maintained. Designate areas and times of use.	RECREATION - Trails Pedestrian LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Suitable existing trails improved and new trails constructed. Designate areas and times of use.	RECREATION - Trails Pedestrian LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Suitable existing trails improved and new trails constructed. Designate areas and times of use.
RECREATION - Trails Equestrian LUA: Allowed for boarders only. MA: Existing trails maintained.	RECREATION - Trails Equestrian LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Existing trails maintained. Designate areas and times of use.	RECREATION - Trails Equestrian LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Suitable existing trails improved and new trails constructed. Designate areas and times of use.	RECREATION - Trails Equestrian LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Suitable existing trails improved and new trails constructed. Designate areas and times of use.

Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2 (Minimum Use)	Proposed Action	Alternative 4 (Maximum Use)
RECREATION - Trails Motorized LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Trails Motorized LUA: Not Allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Trails Motorized LUA: Not Allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Trails Motorized LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Suitable existing trails maintained. designate areas and times of use.
RECREATION - Trails Non-motorized Passenger Vehicles LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Trails Non-motorized Passenger Vehicles LUA: Not allowed. MA: None.	RECREATION - Trails Non-motorized Passenger Vehicles LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Suitable existing trails improved and maintained. Designate areas and times of use.	RECREATION - Trails Non-motorized Passenger Vehicles LUA: Allowed in designated areas and times. MA: Suitable existing trails improved and new trails constructed. Designate areas and times of use.
RECREATION - Equestrian Facilities LUA: No additional facilities. MA: None.	RECREATION - Equestrian Facilities LUA: No additional facilities. MA: None.	RECREATION - Equestrian Facilities LUA: Outdoor riding ring built; horse shows and clinics allowed by BLM permit. MA: Outdoor riding ring constructed.	RECREATION - Equestrian Facilities LUA: Outdoor riding ring built; horse shows and clinics allowed by BLM permit. MA: Outdoor riding ring constructed.
WILDLIFE LUA: Wildlife habitat not actively managed. MA: None.	WILDLIFE LUA: Wildlife habitat actively managed. MA: Wildlife and habitat management plans developed.	WILDLIFE LUA: Wildlife habitat managed. MA: Wildlife and habitat management plans developed.	WILDLIFE LUA: Wildlife habitat not actively managed. MA: None.
FISHERIES LUA: Existing resource maintained. MA: Maintain through riparian maintenance.	FISHERIES LUA: Existing resource improved. MA: Improve through maintenance and improvement of riparian areas.	FISHERIES LUA: Existing resource improved and enhanced. MA: Active management in cooperation with state and local conservation groups.	FISHERIES LUA: Existing resource improved and enhanced. MA: Active management in cooperation with state and local conservation groups.

Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2 (Minimum Use)	Proposed Action	Alternative 4 (Maximum Use)
VEGETATION - Forest LUA: Existing forested acreage maintained. MA: Removal of safety hazards only.	VEGETATION - Forest LUA: Existing forested acreage maintained. MA: Stand composition and health improved.	VEGETATION - Forest LUA: Existing forested acreage maintained. MA: Stand composition maintained and health improved.	VEGETATION - Forest LUA: Existing forested acreage maintained. MA: Natural forest succession supported.
VEGETATION - Pasture LUA: Not to exceed 50 acres. MA: Invasive/non-native species control program initiated.	VEGETATION - Pasture LUA: Not to exceed 50 acres. MA: Invasive/non-native species control program implemented.	VEGETATION - Pasture LUA: Not to exceed 100 acres. MA: Invasive/non-native species control program implemented and incorporated into environmental education.	VEGETATION - Pasture LUA: Not to exceed 150 acres. MA: Invasive/non-native species control program initiated.
VEGETATION - Historic Hayfields LUA: 100 acres. MA: None. Allowed to grow and reseed naturally.	VEGETATION - Historic Hayfields LUA: 100 acres of grasslands. MA: Convert to native grasses.	VEGETATION - Historic Hayfields LUA: 50 acres of grasslands and 50 acres of pastures. MA: 50 acres converted to grassland and 50 acres to pasture.	VEGETATION - Historic Hayfields LUA: 0 acres of grasslands and 100 acres of pastures. MA: Converted 100 acres to pasture.
RIPARIAN/WETLAND AND PONDS LUA: Existing acreage maintained. MA: Protected and maintained in current condition.	RIPARIAN/WETLAND AND PONDS LUA: Existing acreage maintained. MA: Protected and enhanced.	RIPARIAN/WETLAND AND PONDS LUA: Existing acreage maintained. MA: Protected and enhanced.	RIPARIAN/WETLAND AND PONDS LUA: Existing acreage maintained. MA: Protected and maintained in current condition.